

A Brief History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Connecticut



The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has its roots in New England. The first president of the Church, Joseph Smith, was born in Vermont in 1805, as was the second president, Brigham Young (b. 1801). Joseph Smith's maternal family, the Macks, lived and worked for generations in Old Lyme, Connecticut, beginning with John Mack of Scotland (b. 1653).

The fourth president of the Church, Wilford Woodruff, was born in Farmington (now Avon) in 1807, near the location of the new Hartford Temple. Woodruff's great-uncle Judah Woodruff designed the First Church of Christ Congregational, a Farmington landmark built in 1771.

The first Connecticut residents to join The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were eight Madison residents baptized in 1832. In 1838, Wilford Woodruff returned to his birthplace and baptized his father, stepmother, sister and three others. He also organized a small Mormon congregation with other nearby members.

Most of the early Church members from the eastern U.S. gathered with the main body of Latter-day Saints in Ohio, then Missouri and Illinois and ultimately in Utah. Consequently, early congregations in Connecticut were quite small and records are almost nonexistent.

In the early 20th century, small congregations of Latter-day Saints in Connecticut met in homes, other churches, rented stores or almost any space they could find. In New Haven, a medical associates building was used for two decades, while an early Mormon congregation in Bridgeport met in the Bridgeport Art League facility. The first chapel to be built by the Church in Connecticut was dedicated in September 1952 at the corner of Asylum Avenue and Terry Road in Hartford. As was common at the time, local members helped to finance the building through fundraisers and other contributions.

Connecticut membership grew fourfold from 308 in 1950 to almost 1,200 in 1960, then tripled to well over 3,000 by 1970. In September 1966, Connecticut's first stake was created in Hartford. (A stake is a geographical grouping of multiple congregations, comparable to a diocese.) The stake included congregations in Hartford, Manchester, New Haven, New London, Southington, Madison, Torrington and south-central Massachusetts. In 1977, the Providence Rhode Island Stake was organized, which included several congregations in Connecticut. Over the next few years, other congregations in the Constitution State were included in new stakes in Yorktown and New Haven.



In June 2016, the Providence Rhode Island Stake was split to create the New London Stake. Currently, Latter-day Saints in Connecticut are organized into four stakes and 35 congregations.

Church President Gordon B. Hinckley announced a temple for Hartford in 1992, but this plan was postponed when a suitable site could not be found. Temples were instead built in New York City and Boston. In October 2010, current Church President Thomas S. Monson announced that a temple would now be built in

Hartford. This will be the first Mormon temple in Connecticut.

Today the 15,752 Latter-day Saints in Connecticut come from all walks of life. Sharing a rich heritage of community and public service, they are active in youth sports leagues, interfaith councils, the Boy Scouts of America, civic service, disaster relief and much more. Mormons in Connecticut are committed to contributing to their communities and making their state a wonderful place to live.